

Telephoning Santa Claus



Hello, Santa! I'm Louise.
Don't send me a dollie,
please.
Naughtymobile painted red—
That's what I would like
instead.

Odd Christmas Cakes

A GERMAN NOVELTY.

GERMANY for many years has been the land of Christmas novelties, and each year the Kaiser's ingenious toy, candy and cake makers devise some oddity which proves irresistible in luring small or great sums from the pockets of Yuletide shoppers. One of the latest novelties is for quaint and humorous Christmas cakes, which are literally cartoons in sugar and dough. The cakes are decorated with all sorts of funny figures made of colored sugar and in many instances are not the crude art



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A SOLDIER SALUTING.

products one would expect under the circumstances. The Bavarian peasant, for example, is a fair type of the living original as he is pictured in the German comic weeklies. A Munich waitress carrying a well grouped bunch of foam capped steins of the beverage for which Munich is celebrated at home and abroad, even if she does suggest Salome a trifle, is decidedly lifelike, while the saluting soldier by his very attitude suggests that foam capped steins and sentry duty do not assimilate very well.

The German authorities have done much to encourage the toy-making industry, particularly by collecting toys from all the world that the toymakers might acquaint themselves with the fashions and peculiarities of foreign markets. The wooden animals of the past have been eclipsed by the mechanical toys. A submarine boat which sinks into the water and rises again, all with one charge of soda

powder; a diver which goes to the bottom and bobs up serenely when air is blown into him through a little tube, a Santos-Dumont airship which



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A MUNICH WAITRESS.

really flies, a real Gatling gun with stairs for tin soldiers to go up, a railroad with full working equipment—



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A BAVARIAN PEASANT.

these are among the mechanical toys of Sonneberg. In short, Santa Claus in these times can find the means of gratifying the wishes of his most fastidious petitioner.

HENRY SNYDER.

Christmas With The Pickwickians

NO chronicle of Christmas doings has done it so inimitably as Dickens, and nowhere has Dickens described them better than in the "Pickwick Papers." One might read the paragraph relating to the observance of the holiday half a hundred times and not become weary. The Christmas spirit is everywhere evident in the chapters devoted to the holiday making. From the beginning, when the hero, his three friends and his faithful servant start for Dingley Dell, to the hour of their return there is Christmas in every sentence:

As brisk as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the 22d day of December in the year of grace in which these their faithfully recorded adventures were undertaken and accomplished. Christmas was close at hand in all his bluff and hearty honesty. It was the season of hospitality, merriment and open heartedness. The old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him and amid the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away. Gay and merry was the time, and right gay and merry were at least four of the numerous hearts that were gladdened by its coming.

After traveling through a wide and open country where "the wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground," slowing up as they draw near a country town, where the horses are changed, then again "dashing along the open road, with the fresh air blowing in their faces and gladdening their very hearts within them," they arrive at Dingley Dell, where we are introduced to that famous personage, the fat boy. He is an old acquaintance of Mr. Pickwick, but to Sam Weller his face is strange. To follow this first meeting:

Having given this direction and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the footpath across the fields and walked briskly away, leaving Mr. Weller and the fat boy confronted together for the first time. "Sam looked at the fat boy with great astonishment, but without saying a word, and

the air of a man who could "skait" and having shown his ignorance thereof, was smugly reproved by Mr. Pickwick. Meanwhile, "Mr. Weller and the fat boy having by their joint efforts cut out a slide," all hands participated. Says the chronicler of the day's sport:

It was the most intensely interesting thing to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony—to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up, to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first and turn slowly around on the slide, with his face toward the point from which he had started, to contemplate the playful smile which manifested on his face when he had accomplished the distance and the eagerness with which he turned around when he had done so and ran after his predecessor, his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles, and when he was knocked down, which happened upon the average every third round, it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined to behold him gather up his hat, gloves and handkerchief with a glowing countenance and resume his station in the rank with an ardor and enthusiasm which nothing could abate.

Mr. Pickwick unfortunately breaks through the ice and gets a good wetting, but, being taken on a smart run to the house, put to bed and given unlimited quantities of hot punch, finds himself none the worse next morning, when the party departs from Dingley Dell.

Thus does Dickens tell us of one of the merriest Christmases that a reader could desire. There is no touch of sadness in the chronicle, and all that one could wish for is that the story were longer. Long live the tale, and long may we enjoy Christmas with the Pickwickians!

LONG WALK FOR SANTA.

Tree Burned, Father Goes Eight Miles For New Toys.

Gifts intended for his eight children being destroyed when his lighting of the Christmas tree, just before midnight, caused a fire which damaged his home in Cleveland, Alfred Hammermeister trudged eight miles through snow before he could rouse a store-



MR. PICKWICK WENT SLOWLY AND GRAVELY DOWN THE SLIDE WITH HIS FEET ABOUT A YARD APART.

began to stow the things rapidly away in the cart, while the fat boy stood quietly by and seemed to think it a very interesting sort of thing to see Mr. Weller working by himself.

The conversation of these two characters is too long to reprint here, but not too much so to peruse with the greatest interest. We must pass over the story of the wedding, which was the day before Christmas event at Dingley Dell, at which Mr. Pickwick distinguished himself by a felicitous speech, and get to the story of the dance. Dickens' description of the old sitting room is a gem:

The best sitting room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark paneled room, with a high chimney piece and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens, were the two best fiddlers and the only harp in Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses and on all kinds of brackets stood massive old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up to the candles burned bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, and merry voices and light hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

After the dance was over, Mr. Pickwick having acquitted himself with great credit, the reader is told about the doings in the famous old kitchen. Here hung the mistletoe and did its mission well in adding to the jollity of the occasion. The artist whose pictures appear on his pages has done excellent justice to Dickens' text:

From the center of the ceiling of this kitchen old Waddle had just suspended with his own hands a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and most delightful struggling and confusion, in the midst of which Mr. Pickwick, with a saluatory which would have done honor to a descendant of Lady Tollingtower herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. * * * Waddle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene with the utmost satisfaction, and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use and summarily devouring a particularly fine mince pie that had been carefully put by for somebody else. * * *

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the center of the group, now pulled this way and then that and first kissed on the chin and then on the nose and then on the spectacles, and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side.

Finally we come to Christmas day, which was cold and cheerful and good "skaiting" weather. The party all went to a "pretty large sheet of ice," where Mr. Winkle, having assumed

keeper and gather another supply of presents so that the children's faith in Santa Claus might not be lost.

The children were asleep when Mr. and Mrs. Hammermeister completed decorating the tree. The father decided to light the candles as a test. They burned; so did the cotton snowballs. The blaze awakened the children. "Santy here?" they piped. "Is it mornin'?" The parents gathered them in their arms and rushed to the street. Firemen brought out a lot of fire ruined presents from the house.

"Santy been and gone and our things is burned up!" the children cried.

Hammermeister began his weary search for an open store. He employed the infrequent street cars for long stretches, but trudged mile after mile in fruitless search. Finally he routed a storekeeper from his bed and, burdening himself with a new supply, trudged home to turn sorrow into joy.

Hunting Christmas Ghosts.

Ghost hunting bids fair to become the ruling passion of Washington society. The fortunate owners of a peaked house, roped with ivy and densely surrounded by trees, are issuing cards for a Christmas specter hunt. The Christmas ghost hunt is imported from England, where the houses are ancient enough to harbor specters who were there before William the Conqueror. The comparative newness of this country leads some to predict that the fad over here will fail. There are exceptions, however, for even in Washington there is one of the treasure guarding ghosts—an out and out buccaneer of the Spanish main variety, with cocked hat, gold lace, ruffles, high yellow boots, red jacket and an odor of antiquity. Those acquainted with him say that he clicks his chains of stolen doubloons.—Washington Star.

A Christmas Sentiment.

However sincere we may be in our efforts to spread Christmas cheer, our charity is none the less a testimony to our sense of the fact that peace and good will have not come upon the earth. Poverty and wretchedness are not to be offset by yearly gifts of baskets of food and outgrown clothes.

We ought to make the spasmodic kindness of Christmas one of the constant forces of our industrial world. Equality and fraternity are born not of charity, but of justice.

Instead of commercializing Christmas we ought to Christianize commercialism.—New York Mail.

"Hark! Here Santa Comes!"



LOOKING FOR SANTA CLAUS.

Why Saint Nicholas?

By ROBERT DONNELL.

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WHY is Santa Claus sometimes called St. Nicholas? For the most excellent reason that Nicholas is the real name of the saint. Until comparatively recent years there was no Santa Claus at Christmas time. When the old saint comes down the chimney Dec. 24, Christmas eve, and deposits gifts for the children in the suspended stockings he is just nineteen days behind time, for his true and proper time is Dec. 5, that being the eve of St. Nicholas day. Just how Nicholas got to be the Christmas eve saint is not altogether clear, but those iconoclasts who dig into ancient matters are probing this secret. They have discovered, or claim to have discovered, that the Christmas eve Santa Claus really originated in America, being transported to England from New York.

In the saints' calendar Dec. 6 is St. Nicholas day. Nicholas was bishop of Myra, in Lycia. He is believed to have lived under the Emperors Diocletian and Constantine and is the patron saint of poor maidens, sailors, travelers, merchants and children. Rich maidens, of course, are also quite willing to acknowledge him when he comes along with diamond dog collars, necklaces and tiaras.

Before the great religious reformation the custom of giving presents on St. Nicholas eve was general throughout Christian Europe. When the worship of the saints was abolished the practice died out in England, where for about three centuries St. Nicholas failed to visit households on the evening of Dec. 5 to leave presents for good children. By the way, it should be pointed out that Nicholas was noted even in infancy as a particularly good and pious child. Therefore his visits are not made to bad children—only to those whose parents can vouch for their good behavior during the previous year.

In Austria, Holland and Poland St. Nicholas eve is still observed. Good children get presents, secretly left in their shoes placed upon the hearthstone for the purpose or in their stockings hung from the mantel. When New York was settled by Hollanders the devout Dutchmen brought over to America their religious customs, not forgetting that of St. Nicholas eve. In old New Amsterdam the saint made his visits the night of Dec. 5. St. Nicholas day being celebrated by the settlers as a holiday. In time the Dutch were supplanted by the English. New Amsterdam became New York, and the old St. Nicholas eve gift giving custom was reintroduced into England from New York. But in England the custom of giftmaking on Christmas eve had grown up. There was, however, no Santa Claus ceremony. Gifts were made outright and without secrecy.

When St. Nicholas sailed back to England there was consternation among fond papas and mammas in the tight little isle.

"What! Shall we have two days of gift giving and less than three weeks apart?" they cried.

Thrifty English parents, it is supposed, determined that one day of giving was enough, and so they simply transferred St. Nicholas to Christmas eve.

The Gift.

By FRANK H. SWEET.

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THE Christmas chimes are sounding on the air. And, as I sit and listen to their sweet, unearthly music, gone is every care, forgot is all the turmoil of the street. The troubles that the path of man beset, the vast anxieties of human life, all fade away, and every fond regret is lost in all their glad and joyous strife.

WHAT though I seem alone on this fair day, From happy comradeship stand isolate, With none to greet me as I walk my way.

To merely live I count a happy fate— To merely listen to those joyous sounds That through the crisp of winter call so free, Although the merry-makers on their rounds Pause not to think of or remember me.

IS'T not enough that on this Christmas morn, This glad birth morn of him whose day it is, My heart, but yesterday so sad, forlorn, Doth open to the message that was his? Is't not enough to know that from above The tidings of a sacrifice divine Come as a gift of an eternal love That I have but to take to make it mine?



The Christmas Prayer

IRISH POINT OF VIEW.

It is a merry Christmas
When there is lots of snow,
For then through my good shovel
Some golden coin I know.

And 'tis a merry Christmas
When not a flake is seen,
For Christmas to the Irish
Is merry when it's green.
R. K. MUNKITTRICK.